



With plates in hand, children wait for food to be served. Like them, many residents of the slum in Mirpur's Chalantika have taken temporary refuge at nearby Bangabandhu Bidyaniketan School after a devastating fire razed their homes to ashes. The photo was taken around 2pm yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

MIRPUR SLUM FIRE

No sign of rehabilitation yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With thousands of shanties razed in Friday's fire at Mirpur's Chalantika, rehabilitation of thousands of people rendered homeless has become a major challenge.

Several hundreds of people are living on the streets nearby, while some are trying to clean up the charred remains to erect temporary sheds. Many, however, are not that fortunate as most of the shanties are built on a jheel (lake).

No efforts were seen to rehabilitate the victims as of yesterday noon. The Dhaka District Administration was preparing a list of victims. So far they have enlisted 1,800 affected shanties.

Mohammad Jashim, 40, a day labourer, who has been living in the slum for 14 years, said he had six rooms. His five-member family used to occupy two, while four rooms were rented out.

On the first night, they roamed the street. The next night, they stayed at a shelter. Yesterday, Jashim was not sure where his family would stay.

"Some people came and wrote down our names. Some assured help. But we haven't received anything yet. There was no assurance of rehabilitation," Jashim said.

Most of the shanties were made of corrugated tin, wood or bamboo -- with the roofs covered with polythene.

Anxiety over what the future holds has gripped almost all of the around 3,000 families affected by the fire, according to locals.

Recalling other fire incidents, another slum dweller Kabir Hossain, 50, said after such fires break out, government authorities, NGOs and volunteers came forward with aid. But this time, such efforts have been inadequate, Kabir observed.

"It seems the authorities are ignoring us," he said.

The fire victims did not receive any aid yet, except for food. The district administration, local MP and the ward councillor are providing food to the victims.

Some volunteers were providing food to the slum dwellers at Bangabandhu

Writ petition seeks probe into rawhide price slump

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking its directive on the government to form an enquiry committee to find out the reason and people responsible for the unprecedented and drastic fall of rawhide price during this year's Eid-ul-Azha.

Barrister Mohiuddin Md Hanif Farhad submitted the petition, challenging the inaction and failure of the authorities concerned in preventing the price slump.

Secretaries to the ministries of commerce and industries, chairman of

Rohingya repatriation can begin anytime: foreign secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Repatriation of Rohingya refugees -- who fled a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar in August 2017 -- can begin anytime, foreign secretary Shahidul Haque said yesterday at a discussion.

"Repatriation is always on the table. It can start anytime. It is a continual process," Shahidul Haque said while responding to a journalist's query on whether the repatriation of Rohingyas will start on August 22 as reported by an international news agency.

Reuters on Thursday reported that Myanmar and Bangladesh have agreed to start a fresh attempt to repatriate Rohingyas on August 22.

The Red and Green Research, an initiative of journalists, organised the discussion on 'Rohingya crisis: way forward' at the BISS auditorium.

Nearly 7,50,000 Rohingyas fled Rakhine State for Bangladesh after a military-led crackdown in August 2017. The United Nations said the perpetrators had

"genocidal intent".

Previous attempts at persuading Rohingyas to return to Rakhine failed due to the refugees' unwillingness. An initiative to repatriate Rohingyas in November 2018 failed after the refugees protested.

Rohingyas at that time said they want to return to Myanmar, but seek guarantee of citizenship, UN-backed safe zone in Rakhine, recognition of their ethnicity as Rohingyas and return to the place from where they were driven out.

"Repatriation [of Rohingyas] has always been one of the priority issues for Bangladesh. We are always saying that the peaceful solution to the crisis is Rohingyas going back to their homeland. We have never suggested any alternatives," Shahidul said.

He said that Bangladesh would try to encourage Rohingyas to return to their homeland in the next couple of weeks.

"If they don't go back, they will be deprived of all rights, not just land rights. For their own interest, I think they should

volunteer to go back to their homeland," he said.

"Going back to their own homeland does not mean that we are asking them to forget about the issues of justice and accountability. The process to ensure justice and accountability has already begun and it will continue irrespective of their return," he added.

Taking part in the discussion, former chief of National Human Rights Commission Mizanur Rahman said he doubts whether the international community is sincere about resolving the Rohingya crisis.

"The initial response of Bangladesh to the Rohingya crisis was weak and disorientated," he alleged.

"Bangladesh believed that Myanmar is a peace-loving neighbour and through bilateral talks and means with the assistance of big brother India and newly adopted big brother China, the problem will be resolved within a foreseeable future," he said.

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10 hurt in scuffle at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people were injured in a clash between male nurses and employees at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday, over receiving report for dengue tests.

The incident took place in front of Pathology department of the hospital's new building around 12:30pm, sources at the DMCH told The Daily Star.

Sources said some fourth-class staff and technicians of the hospital's Pathology department locked into an altercation with four male nurses, as one of them tried to collect reports of blood test from the department without standing in queue.

At one stage, they attacked each other, the sources added. At least 10

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DB recovers new variety of yaba

STAR REPORT

A new type of yaba pills, light orange in colour are entering Bangladesh from Myanmar through Teknaf.

The pills, reportedly costlier than other varieties, are making their way to northern districts of the country via Dhaka.

A team of Bogura police yesterday claimed to have recovered 30,000 of the pills, raiding a rented house at Maddhya Paikpara of Mirpur-1, after arresting alleged peddler Faruk Mia, 25, in Bogura on Friday.

The team of Detective Branch (DB) of Bogura led by its inspector Aslam Ali conducted the drive at Faruk's rented house, based on information gleaned from him.

Faruk and his wife Nipa Begum, both hailing from Habiganj; and Omar Faruq, Md Sayem from Cox's Bazar were arrested from Charmatha area on Dhaka-Bogura Highway with 3,500 similar pills.

Faruk was on a two-day remand after police filed a case following the recovery and arrest of the four.

"The arrestees admitted that this was their first shipment of the light orange pills," Superintendent of Police in Bogura Ali Ashraf Bhuiyan told The Daily Star yesterday.

The SP said Faruk told them that he himself smuggled in the pills, and transported them to different districts based on orders.

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MJF concerned over surge in child rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation yesterday expressed concern over the alarming rise in incidents of child rape in the country.

Issuing a statement, the organisation called upon the government to take effective measures to end the ongoing violence and torture against children.

It also expressed grave concern over the deteriorating physical and mental condition of the Bhola girl, who was raped on the night before Eid-ul-Azha.

MJF believes violence against women and children has reached an intolerable stage because of impunity and absence of collective protests against incidents of rape.

"Incidents of children being raped, one after another, are dragging us towards a dreadful situation," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF. "The Bhola girl is living her life in fear and pain -- it has made us all ashamed and afraid," she added.

Shaheen Anam urged the government to ensure safety for women and children through taking effective measures and finding out reasons behind increase in such incidents.

NINTH WAGE BOARD

Journalists protest Noab's writ petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists yesterday staged a countrywide demonstration condemning newspaper owners' legal move to postpone implementation of the ninth wage board.

Criticising the recent writ petition against the wage board placed by Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab), they demanded that the government immediately publish gazette of the new salary structure.

They also demanded to stop "unethical" layoffs of journalists and media workers at different newspapers ahead of the implementation of the new wage board.

The protest rally, human chain, and procession were organised under the banner of Sangbadik-Shramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad. The central event was held in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Speaking at the event, Mollah Jalal, a president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), said the government should take whatever legal steps are required against the writ petition filed by Noab, as it is their responsibility to implement the wage board.

"If the wage board is not implemented, then no one will stay in this profession," Mollah added.

He also threatened to go for tougher movement if their demands are not met.

Sohel Haider Chowdhury, a general secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), said they are

constantly facing various obstacles and repression in regard to implementation of the wage board.

"Noab is connected to each of these matters," he added.

Terming Noab as a "litigious" association, Alamgir Hossain Khan, president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Newspaper Press Workers, questioned how it dared to place writ petition against a government decision.

After the protest rally, journalists brought out a procession towards the secretariat, where they submitted a memorandum containing their demands to the information minister.

**RALLY IN MYMENSINGH**  
Demanding immediate implementation of the ninth wage board for journalists, a protest rally was held in front of Mymensingh Press Club yesterday.

Journalists working for different newspapers joined the hour-long rally, organised by BFUJ and Mymensingh Union of Journalists (MUJ).

Condemning the writ petition placed by Noab, the speakers said for the interest of the country's newspaper sector and the people involved with it, the wage board must be implemented soon.

Protesting the ongoing layoff of employees at different media houses, they also demanded a law for ensuring journalists' job security.

MUJ president Atauil Karim Khokon, its secretary Mir Golam Mustafa and joint secretary Amit Roy addressed the rally, among others. A procession was also brought out in the town.

Rape accused held in Ashulia

Two arrested in Chattogram over separate incidents; case filed in Jhalakathi

STAR REPORT

Police arrested an accused of a gang-rape case in Ashulia on Saturday night, hours after a case was filed by the victim.

The arrestee, 21-year old Roni, with two other men allegedly gang-raped the woman inside her rented flat in Natunpara on August 13, police said.

Quoting the case statement, Ashulia Police Station SI Faziqul Islam said on August 13, four youths -- Roni, Joy, Shamim and Razu -- entered the house and tried to extort the woman and her husband, accusing them of making alcohol. As the couple refused, they beat up the couple, and confined the husband in a room. Roni, Joy, and Shamim then raped the wife. Razu was accused as an accomplice to the crime, said Faziqul. The woman was sent to the One-Stop Crisis Center at Dhaka Medical College Hospital for medical tests, said Javed Masud, inspector (investigation) of Ashulia Police Station.

MADRASA PRINCIPAL SUED IN JHALAKATHI

In Jhalakathi, an eighth-grader was allegedly raped by the principal of her madrasa.

The girl's father filed a case with Jhalakathi Sadar Police Station yesterday against the principal of Shah Mahamudia Alim Madrasa, after the girl was rescued from the principal's house by Fatiha Yesmin, superintendent of police of Jhalakathi.

The father said the girl had been lodging at the principal's house and studying at the madrasa for three years. On August 15, the principal raped her at his house. He threatened the girl with punishment if she disclosed the incident.

A day or two later, the father found out about it, and lodged a complaint with Jhalakathi Sadar Police Station.

The victim's medical test was completed at Jhalakathi Sadar hospital yesterday afternoon, and she was taken to the judicial magistrate's court for her statement, said Jhalakathi Sadar Police Station OC Shant Kumar Gayen.

**TWO ARRESTED IN CTG OVER RAPES**  
In Chattogram, police arrested a man on charge of raping a five-year-old girl in Panchlaish area on Saturday night.

The arrestee is Md Sohel, 18, a tea seller. He was arrested from Panchlaish, after receiving complaint from the victim's family, said Officer-in-Charge Abul Kashem Bhuiyan of Panchlaish Police Station.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said Sohel took the child to his house at Bhora Pukurpar on August 15, and raped her.

Noticing the physical condition of the victim, family members rushed her to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Saturday evening, where

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SCRAP ON WHEELS... Instead of being in a junkyard, this rundown vehicle carries people from Keraniganj to Nayabazar in Old Dhaka. Such unfit vehicles are a key reason behind most road accidents. The photo was taken at Nayabazar on Thursday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Awareness must to prevent dengue

Stresses health minister

Bss, Dhaka

Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday underscored the need for creating public awareness to prevent the dengue outbreak.

He asked the authorities concerned to intensify efforts to control Aedes mosquito and continue cleaning drives to protect city dwellers from the menace, according to an official press release.

He said the health ministry, LGRD ministry and two Dhaka city corporations have to work together to prevent dengue from spreading, added the release.

The minister was speaking at a views-exchange meeting with "Bangladesh Awami League Dengue Prevention and Treatment Monitoring Cell" at the secretariat.

The health minister chaired the meeting, where Convener and Chairman of the cell and Bangladesh Medical Association President Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin also spoke.

The monitoring cell members -- AL Health and Population Affairs Secretary Dr Rokeya Sultana; Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Vice Chancellor Dr Kanak Kanti Barua; Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad General Secretary Dr MA Aziz; Dr Md Jamal Uddin Chowdhury and Dr Ehsanul Kabir Jaglul -- addressed the meeting, among others.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**MEMORIAL PROGRAMME**  
Remembering Bangabandhu  
Organiser: Bangladesh Mahila Parishad  
Venue: Sufia Kamal Bhaban, Segunbagicha  
Time: 4pm

**SESSION**  
English speaking  
Venue: EMK Center  
Time: 4pm

**WORKSHOP**  
Understanding Applied Behaviour Analysis  
Organiser: Countrywide Health Initiative for Learning & Development  
Venue: Gulshan North Club  
Time: 9am

**TRAINING**  
New Vat Law & Customs Management  
Venue: IPDP Training, Banani  
Time: 6:30pm

**MUSIC CLASS**  
RAGA: Theory & Practice with Nishit Dey  
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani  
Time: 6pm

**DISCUSSION**  
Bangabandhu O Bangladesh  
Organiser: Ministry of Shipping  
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum  
Time: 4pm

**RAGA**  
Theory and Practice  
With Nishit Dey  
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani  
Time: 6pm